



Department of Justice

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INDIANAPOLIS BANK ROBBER CHARGED

U.S. POSTAL MAIL CARRIER SHOT DURING ROBBERY

PRESS RELEASE

Indianapolis - Brook Abebe, 43, Indianapolis, Indiana, was charged today with armed bank robbery, use of a firearm during a crime of violence, and felon in possession of a firearm, announced Timothy M. Morrison, U.S. Attorney, Southern District of Indiana, following an investigation by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the United States Postal Inspection Service and the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department.

The indictment alleges that in the afternoon of July 2, 2009, Brook Abebe robbed the Chase Bank branch located at 8858 Southeastern Avenue, Indianapolis. Brandishing both a Taurus .38 caliber revolver and a BB gun, Abebe approached the teller counter and demanded money. He then pointed the firearm at bank employees and customers, and ordered them to the floor. A teller retrieved currency and placed it into a plastic container. As a customer exited the back doors of the bank, Abebe discharged one round from the firearm in the direction of the customer. The teller then handed the container with the money to Abebe. At this time, United States Postal Service Mail Carrier Robert Norman entered the bank. Abebe ordered Norman to the floor, and Norman complied. As soon as Abebe left the bank through the back doors, Norman called 911 on his cellular phone and then left the bank through the front doors. Based on their crossing directions of travel, they met face-to-face outside the bank and collided. Abebe then raised his hand in which he held the firearm, Norman grabbed that hand and Abebe fired into Norman's face.

Abebe then fled in his get-away car, which was observed by a responding police officer, who pursued him. During the flight Abebe lost control of his car and crashed. He was then arrested. The firearm and stolen currency were recovered from within the car. The BB gun had been left in the bank. An audit indicated that approximately \$9,138 had been stolen.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney James M. Warden, who is prosecuting the case for the government, Abebe faces a maximum of 25 years in prison for the armed robbery charge; a maximum of 10 years in prison for the felon in possession charge; and not less than 10 years in prison, consecutive to the other counts, for the use of the firearm during a crime of violence charge. Abebe also faces a maximum fine of \$250,000 per count and supervised release of 5 years. An initial hearing will be scheduled before a U.S. Magistrate Judge in Indianapolis, Indiana.

The Indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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